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ABSTRACT

The New Jersey Vocational Education Basic Skills Commission was formed to examine issues related to preparing students to pass the state's High School Proficiency Test (HSPT), which must be passed by both academic and vocational students before they can graduate from high school. The commission decided that vocational teachers should have no additional involvement in providing remedial instruction to students failing the HSPT; rather, a basic skills class should be required in lieu of academic electives. Vocational schools should provide separate remediation classes and should allow sending schools to meet the general academic requirements. Students who fail the HSPT and who select a vocational program should be scheduled for a summer program following the ninth grade. In addition, basic skills should be infused into all vocational-technical programs to help students continue to develop and use basic skills. Sending schools must provide the best possible education from grades K through 12 as well as any remediation required to help students enrolled in shared time vocational schools to meet graduation requirements. Full-time vocational schools should provide students failing the HSPT help in obtaining the necessary basic skills instruction by replacing academic electives with a basic skills class, modifying academic courses, and modifying exploratory courses. A team of basic skills teachers from sending schools should work with vocational teachers to infuse basic skills into vocational courses through a competency-based program. (A report describing the project during which the six position papers were developed is included along with the actual papers and an executive summary of their main points.) (MN)

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ISSUES AND THE RECOMMENDATIONS

OF THE NEW JERSEY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION BASIC SKILLS COMMISSION

Prepared by

The New Jersey Vocational Education Basic Skills Commission

for

Cape May County Vocational-Technical Center
Cape May Courthouse, New Jersey

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We, the members of the New Jersey Vocational Education Basic Skills Commission are pleased to transmit this report, commissioned by the Cape May County Vocational Schools, to Dr. Gordon Ascher, Associate Commissioner, Division of Vocational Education, Department of Education, State of New Jersey.

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INTRODUCTION

In an effort to measure and improve the educational standards of its schools and to better prepare its high school graduates to be productive citizens, New Jersey initiated the High School Proficiency Test (HSPT). Beginning with the ninth-grade class of 1985-86, the HSPT must be passed as a requirement for high school graduation. It is a requirement for both academic and vocational students.

The HSPT measures mastery of reading, writing, and mathematical concepts (basic skills). The rigorous quality of the test has raised a number of concerns among vocational educators. These include the following:

- Some vocational students will fail the HSPT and will therefore require remediation.
- Academic students may be better prepared to take and pass the test..
- Vocational students may be uncomfortable with the academic format of the test, despite the fact that vocational students' knowledge is sufficient to meet the HSPT standards.
- The number of students ineligible for high school graduation will increase.
- Students will have to choose between vocational education and academic/remedial programs.
- Increased math, science and communication requirements will cause voctional program enrollments to decline.

Vocational education is viewed by many educators as a potential motivating force in the retention of students in the public school system. In addition, the objectives of vocational programs are felt by many to be critical to the future welfare of many students and of society. As the nation continues to increase the standards of academic achievement, efforts must be made to continue the opportunity for vocational skill development.

As the struggle for classroom time (academic and vocational) continues, academic and vocational educators will need to cooperate in order to best serve the broad educational goals of academic and vocational students. There is no argument with the need to improve the <u>quality</u> of student preparation, however, since vocational education delivery systems vary, a concern does exist in terms of methodology. Vocational delivery systems include comprehensive high schools, full and shared time county vocational high schools, and local area vocational schools. Each system is faced with its own parameters and circumstances as it attempts to fulfill multifaceted academic and vocational objectives. Recognizing that it is imperative that vocational students be prepared to pass the HSPT and taking into account the variety of vocational delivery systems, educators must answer the following questions:

- In a shared time delivery system, how can basic skills and/or remediation best be offered?
- Should basic skills be integrated and recognized within the vocational curriculum? Should credit be awarded? If so, by whom?
- Should certification regulations be modified? Is so, how?

The New Jersey Vocational Education Basic Skills Commission was formed to examine these questions and concerns. Commission members identified further relevant issues of concern, objectively considered various courses of

action, and offered recommendations in the form of a series of position papers. The following section, **Executive Summary**, identifies the issues examined by each subcommitee and summarizes their recommendations. The balance of this publication presents, in full, each position paper. The format of each paper includes the following: a brief statement of the issue examined; a variety of options, including arguments for and against each; an explanation of the subcommittee's recommendation; and a brief analysis of the consequences/impact of the recommendation. The strategies and recommendations presented here are offered in the spirit of serving the needs of New Jersey's vocational students, the objective being to help vocational students develop the academic skills needed to pass the HSPT while continuing their vocational training.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE ISSUES AND THE RECOMMENDATIONS OF THE NEW JERSEY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION BASIC SKILLS COMMISSION

This section identifies the issues examined by the New Jersey Vocational Education Basic Skills Commission. Also provided here are brief statements that summarize the recommendations offered by the commission.

Issue #1 What should be the instructional role of the vocational teacher in providing the reinforcement and remediation in basic skills needed to insure that students pass the High School Proficiency Test (HSPT)?

Recommendation: There should be no additional involvement of the vocational teacher; instead, a basic skills class should be required in lieu of academic electives. If academic courses are not offered by a vocational school, exploratory shop courses should be modified to incorporate basic skills.

Issue #2 How must vocational education curricula be modified to (a) accommodate students who fail the High School Proficiency Test and (b) award academic credit for basic skills?

Recommendation, Part A: Separate remediation classes should be provided by vocational schools. In addition, basic skills requirements for the trade areas should be determined. Vocational teachers should be trained to teach these skills as part of their normal lessons, or, certified teachers should be provided in the basic skill areas to teach with the vocational teachers.

Recommendation, Part B: The vocational schools should offer remediation programs and allow sending schools to meet the general academic requirements. Credit should be awarded for the remediation courses offered by the vocational school.

Issue #3 How should the Local Area Vocational School Districts or comprehensive high schools modify their operational procedures to enable the students to participate in vocational education programs while obtaining basic skills needed to pass the HSPT?

Recommendation: Students who fail the HSPT should be offered the option of vocational-technical education or other curriculum programs available at the high school. Students who select a vocational program should be scheduled for a summer program following the ninth grade. The program would consist of a 50 percent vocational career orientation and a 50 percent basic skills orientation. Furthermore, basic skills should be infused into all vocational-technical programs in order that students continue to develop and use basic skills.

Issue #4 How should shared time vocational schools modify their operational procedures to enable students to participate in vocational education programs while obtaining the basic skills needed to pass the HSPT?

Recommendation: The sending school must provide the best possible education from grades kindergarten through twelve, as well as any remediation required to assure graduation upon completion of both academic and vocational education programs.

Issue #5 How should full time vocational schools modify their operational procedures to enable students to participate in vocational education programs while obtaining the basic skills needed to pass the HSPT?

Recommendation: Basic skills needed to pass the HSPT would be obtained in one of three ways: (1) replacement of academic electives by a basic skills class; (2) modification of academic courses; (3) modification of exploratory shop time.

Issue #6 What strategies need to be developed to provide a rationale for sending-school districts to award diploma credit for vocational courses which contain basic skills but are taught in the shared time vocational schools?

Recommendation: A team of basic skills teachers from the sending schools should work with the vocational teachers to infuse basic skills into the vocational courses through a competency based program. Upon demonstration by a student of the achievement of a specified competency level (which would be established by the basic skills team), the vocational teachers would report the student's achievement to the sending school in order for appropriate credit to be awarded.

CHAPTER ONE

THE ROLE OF THE VOCATIONAL TEACHER

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CHAPTER ONE
THE ROLE OF THE VOCATIONAL TEACHER

Issue

What should be the instructional role of the vocational teacher in providing the vocational education students with the reinforcement and remediation in basic skills needed to pass the High School Proficiency Test (HSPT)?

Options

1. There should be no additional involvement of the vocational teacher. This viewpoint suggests that it is the duty of the academic instructor to teach basic skills to the vocational student. In order to provide instruction in the basic skills outside the vocational classroom, several possibilities exist.

   a. Resource Center/Lab

      Students would be sent to the resource center/lab during the shop class time for instruction in basic skills. An academic instructor would provide the basic skills instruction.

      PRO

      - This approach would provide additional time for supplemental instruction in basic skills.

      CON

      - Less time would be devoted to shop instruction in the vocational school. As a result, the student might not meet graduation requirements within the traditional school year.

   b. Modify academic courses

      Academic courses designed for vocational-technical students would be modified 'to emphasize the basic skills inherent in an academic offering.' These specially designed courses would also feature a smaller student ratio within each class.

      PRO

      - This alternative would provide additional emphasis in basic skills.

      Con

      - The emphasis of these courses would be directed to the instruction of basic skills rather than the particular academic content.

c. Replacement of academic electives

Students would be unable to select an academic elective; instead, they would be required to take a basic skills class until they had passed the HSPT.

PRO

- Additional time would be provided for the study of basic skills.

CON

- The student would be limited in the selection of other elective courses.

d. Basic skills instruction at nontraditional times

Courses in the basic skills could be offered on Saturday, on weeknights, or during the summer vacation.

PRO

- This nontraditional time frame would have no effect on existing academic and vocational classes.

CON

- Students would be required to attend school beyond the regular school day.
- The additional salaries that would be required for teachers could prohibit this approach.

e. Programmed Learning/Computer Aided Instruction

Students would be sent to a computer lab during the shop class time for instruction in the basic skills. An academic instructor would work with the students.

PRO

- Students would be able to master basic skills by using a variety of materials that aid instruction through drill and practice. Computerized learning and programmed learning would provide an alternative approach for the mastery of skills.
- This approach would provide additional time for supplemental instruction to address basic skills.

CON

- The machine could never replace the teacher's personalized instruction.

- Less time would be devoted to shop instruction in a vocational school. As a result, students might not meet the graduation requirements within the traditional school year.

2. Basic skills instruction should be incorporated into existing vocational curricula. This viewpoint suggests that basic skills should be addressed within the vocational classroom by either a vocational instructor or a basic skills instructor. In order to provide basic skills instruction within the classroom, several possibilities exist.

   a. Vocational Instructors can be made responsible for basic skills instruction.

      Vocational instructors would teach, as part of their vocational courses, communication and computation skills.

      PRO

      - Basic skills instruction would be related to a student's specific vocational training.

      - No additional certification would be required.

      CON

      - Vocational instructors may not possess the training necessary to teach basic skills.

      - Vocational instructors may be opposed to teaching basic skills.

   b. Academic instructor can be placed within a vocational classroom.

      Those vocational program areas using competency based education (CBE) would develop a segment of objectives which would address related academic skills. These skills would be introduced and practiced within the vocational classroom. This instruction could be jointly developed by the academic and vocational instructors. The academic instructor would teach the related basic skills.

      PRO

      - Aligning the academic skills with CBE would help develop a segment of the curriculum which would be used as a teaching guide by both the academic and vocational instructors. The student would be responsible for mastering a set of basic skills which would be applied through vocational curricula.

      CON

      - This additional instruction within the vocational classroom would lessen shop instructional time.

      - The additional salary that would be required for a second teacher could prohibit this approach.

c. Modified shop time.

The exploratory course could be modified to provide training in basic skills.

PRO

- Modification of exploratory shop time would alleviate the problem of scheduling separate basic skills classes for those students who need additional instruction in these skills.

CON

- Modification of instruction in the exploratory shops would limit the students' time and exposure to various career alternatives.

d. Vocational resource materials.

Classes in shop theory could make use of available resource materials, including textbooks, workbooks, trade magazines, and journals. These materials would help to emphasize the communication and computation skills that are appropriate for the development of on-the-job skills.

PRO

A variety of job assignments in communication and computation would be included in instruction. This would expose students to reference materials that help in understanding the theory portion of the shop instructional content.

CON

- Vocational students are often unreceptive to any type of academic content within the vocational shop area.

Recommendation/Rationale

After careful review of many options, it is recommended that a basic skills class should be added to the current academic subjects that are required for all ninth grade students. "Replacement of academic electives" (option 1-c) and "Modified shop time" (option 2-c) should be considered in order to implement this option. "Replacement of academic electives" would be the easiest method of implementation because it would not affect shop time. However, not all vocational schools offer academic elective courses. Therefore, it may be necessary to implement "Modified shop time." Although exploratory time would be diminished, it is often not required for the acquisition of a vocational certificate. The increased time allotted for instruction in the basic skills would serve a greater benefit. The responsibility for the instruction of basic skills would be dependent upon academic teachers. This could affect vocational class time. "Vocational resource materials" (option 2-d) should be utilized. This would reinforce the basic skills that are applicable to the shop content, thus involving the vocational teacher who would work within the content area on all grade levels.

Consequences/Impact

The implementation of these recommendations would strengthen the students' ability to master the basic skills needed to pass the HSPT. Vocational-technical students must have basic skills; otherwise, the ability of these students to achieve in the trade and technical training areas will be hampered.

CHAPTER TWO

THE MODIFICATION OF VOCATIONAL CURRICULA

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CHAPTER TWO
THE MODIFICATION OF VOCATIONAL CURRICULA

Issue

How must vocational education curricula be modified to (a) accommodate students who fail the High School Proficiency Test and (b) award academic credit for basic skills.

Part A, Accommodating Students Who Fail The HSPT

1. In order to satisfy the HSPT mandated skill requirements, separate remediation classes should be provided by vocational schools.

   PRO

   - Students would acquire skills as mandated by the HSPT requirements.
   - Students would be allowed to attend vocational schools.

   CON

   - Students could lose time from their vocational classes. This would have a negative effect on each student's primary goal.
   - Students would feel penalized by their removal from the vocational classroom.

2. The basic skills requirements for the trade areas should be analyzed. Vocational teachers should be trained to teach these skills as part of their normal lessons, and/or teachers certified in these skills should teach with the vocational teachers.

   PRO

   - Students would learn in their normal classroom setting and would not have a sense of separation or curriculum fragmentation.
   - If this process were part of the curriculum format, teachers would better understand that they have a responsibility to teach basic skills.
   - Students would have the opportunity for immediate laboratory reinforcement.
   - Remediation of students in vocational education would be awarded course credit by the State.

   CON

   - Teachers would require training to teach HSPT skills.
   - Curriculum revision, clearly denoting the specific skills required for each performance task, would be required.

- Budget constraints could preclude hiring staff and providing additional staff development.

- There would be time constraints for training.

3. HSPT skills would be realized through better articulation with academic teachers.

   PRO

   - Academic teachers would realize the importance of HSPT skills acquisition in support of vocational task development.

   - Vocationally related basic skills and HSPT skills would be introduced to academic classes.

   CON

   - Overburdened academic teachers would have to relate their instruction to the needs of vocational students.

   - Increased articulation among teachers may not lead to significant gains in HSPT skill development.

4. In order to meet HSPT requirements, vocational program time may be reduced.

   PRO

   - Students would receive the required HSPT remediation.

   - Students could still attend vocational classes.

   CON

   - Vocational student goals might not be met.

   - Performance in vocational areas might not be fully developed.

   - Staffing levels could be affected by reduced teacher contact hours.

5. Students would meet HSPT skill requirements more easily if shared time vocational education took place in a full time vocational setting (i.e., shared time schools become full time centers).

   PRO

   - It would be easier to provide remediation if travel time were eliminated.

   - Students could be more easily scheduled for remediation classes.

   CON

   - This alternative would be expensive and would require the acquisition of additional facilities.

- Students would be required to select a different high school instead of attending a shared time school.

6. The Special Review Assessment (SRA) process should be utilized to guarantee that vocational students would graduate.

PRO

- This would provide a good backup system for all students, especially since testing in the senior year takes place after the submission of SRA packages.
- Students would receive from vocational education the support they need in order to graduate.

CON

- Documentation for the SRA process must come from somewhere.
- Vocational documentation can best be achieved in conjunction with basic skills instruction as part of vocational education.

Part B, Awarding Academic Credit for Basic Skills

1. In order to facilitate the awarding of credits for developmental course work, vocational schools should teach only remediation programs and allow the sending schools to meet general academic requirements.

PRO

- Students would meet the state mandated credit requirements.
- Vocational school attendance would be minimally affected.

CON

- Students who fail required courses in their sending schools would have to increase subsequent course work and would not be able to attend vocational school.
- Students would continue to be fragmented by the educational process.

2. In order to facilitate the meeting of graduation requirements, sending districts should assume full responsibility for secondary education by strengthening industrial education classes, and vocational schools should become postsecondary institutions.

PRO

- Students would graduate at the appropriate time.
- Students would receive some trade skills.

CON

- In-depth trade related training would be postponed as would be entry into the world of work.
- A complete reorganization of public access to vocational education would be required, along with modifications to the funding system.

3. In order to facilitate the awarding of credit for required course work, vocational education should begin earlier.

PRO

- Students would be able to participate in the total educational process.
- Sending schools would receive extended assistance to help students meet mandated requirements.

CON

- Only the time factor would be changed. The problem would still exist, but in another form.
- Vocational schools could assist with remediation earlier, but the credit factor in developmental course work would not have changed.

4. In order to meet graduation credit requirements, vocational schools should offer less shop time and provide certified personnel to teach related course work.

PRO

- Students would still be able to attend vocational school.
- Students would be more motivated to learn in a vocational setting.

CON

- Vocational learning time would be decreased resulting in a negative curriculum impact.
- Unless courses were truly integrated, students would not be able to benefit from immediate hands-on reinforcement.

5. In order to facilitate the meeting of graduation requirements, the school year should be extended.

PRO

- Students would be ble to meet all requirements.
- Students would be able to attend vocational classes.

CON

- The funding system for public education would have to be modified.

- Learning could be diminished during the summer weather if the schools are not air conditioned.

6. The course work requirements for graduation should be analyzed. Academic articulation and training should be provided for vocational teachers to team teach as part of their normal lessons, or certified teachers should teach with vocational teachers, utilizing criteria set by the sending schools.

PRO

- Students would learn in their normal classroom setting and would not have a sense of separation or curriculum fragmentation.

- If this interrelationship became part of the curriculum process, teachers would be better able to understand the relationship of course requirements and subject matter to life and work situations.

CON

- Additional in-service training for the teaching staff would be required.

- Additional certified personnel would have to be hired.

Recommendation/Rationale:
Part A, Accommodating Students Who Fail the HSPT

It is recommended that Part A, Option 1 (separate remediation classes should be provided by vocational schools) be adopted and encouraged by the New Jersey State Department of Education.

Vocational schools should be encouraged by the Department of Education to provide the professional staff and flexible school scheduling required in order to provide remediation for those students who fail the HSPT. Remediation classes provided by the vocational schools would enable students to participate in vocational programs and receive any required remediation within a single school setting. The unacceptable alternative to this plan is to continue offering remediation (required of some vocational students) at the sending school. This often creates time constraints and prevents students from attending a vocational school.

Recommendation/Rationale:
Part B, Awarding Academic Credit for Basic Skills

It is recommended that Part B, Option 1 (vocational schools should teach only remediation programs and allow the sending schools to meet general academic requirements) be adopted and encouraged by the State Department of Education.

Credit should be awarded for the remediation courses offered by the vocational school. Students who require remediation in order to pass the HSPT should be able to take remediation classes (with credit) within the vocational school setting. Financial and curricular support must be provided by the State Department of Education if this option is to be encouraged. Large numbers of vocational students will need this remediation

program option if they are to continue to attend vocational schools. Additionally, remediation course activities could be aligned more closely with the students' areas of interest within the vocational school when both remediation and vocational education are offered in the same school setting.

Consequences/Impact

If the above recommendations are instituted, students who fail the High School Proficiency Test, or have academic deficiencies, will not automatically be precluded from pursuing an appropriate education. For many of them, preparation for work is of primary importance, and the remediation of academic skills can and should be coordinated with vocational skill development.

There would be no apparent negative consequences to students provided the recommendations are implemented and supported by the State Department of Education as well as local educational agencies. The contention of the recommendations is that alternatives must be sought and supported that will open educational opportunities to students, not close them. If a balanced program that accommodates vocational course time as well as academic courses is not agreed upon, the goal of increased academic attainment will not be met. It appears likely that students will drop out in increased numbers if there is little hope of their passing the High School Proficiency Test.

The impact of this recommendation, if encouraged by the Department of Education, would be tremendous. Vocational educators and academic educators would work together to increase the academic attainment of students, without precluding them from being prepared for employment. The effort would result in the retention of students and improvement of their performance.

CHAPTER THREE

BASIC SKILLS AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE LOCAL AREA VOCATIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OR COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOL

CHAIR: Victor Morella

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CHAPTER THREE
BASIC SKILLS AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE LOCAL AREA VOCATIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT OR COMPREHENSIVE HIGH SCHOOL

Issue

How should the Local Area Vocational School Districts (LAVSDs) or comprehensive high schools modify their operational procedures to enable students to participate in vocational education programs while obtaining the basic skills needed to pass the High School Proficiency Test (HSPT).

Option

1. Do nothing. Wait to determine if the elementary schools' ninth-grade curricula can prepare students for entry into vocational-technical programs.

   PRO

   - No changes would be required in the method of delivery of vocational-technical education through the LAVSDs.
   - If the elementary schools are able to provide students with the skills necessary to pass the HSPT, vocational-technical programs will be improved.

   CON

   - Based on projections, 30 to 50 percent of potential vocational-technical education students will not complete the HSPT skill requirements. Therefore, the number of students who will require remediation in the sophomore year is projected to be high. This remediation will limit the possibility of students enrolling in vocational survey, home economics, industrial arts, or business and office education programs.
   - If students do not successfully complete their remediation work by the sophomore year, their potential for passing will be minimal. The result could be a high dropout rate.
   - Vocational program enrollments in the junior year could decrease significantly, thereby placing a large population of potentially successful students, who lack maturity or the ability to handle academic courses, at the risk of dropping out.

2. Offer summer programs for those students who failed the HSPT during the freshman year.

   PRO

   - This alternative would allow students to focus attention specifically on the skills needed to pass the HSPT.
   - The student's freshman year schedule would not be affected, allowing the selection of vocational or elective courses.

- Students would realize that they might not graduate from high school without completing the summer session program. This concern could provide motivation.

CON

- Some school districts would have difficulty establishing a summer session program. Potential obstacles could include transportation and funding problems, and the difficulty of convincing parents and students that the program is needed based on projected failure statistics.

3. Develop a comprehensive ninth-grade remedial education program based upon HSPT failures.

PRO

- Students would have their first year high school schedule adjusted to complete remedial programs.

CON

- Students and parents might resist this ninth grade remedial education program based upon a test which was nearly correlated to the HSPT.

4. Infuse basic skills instruction into vocational-technical education programs.

PRO

- This approach would provide students with an alternate way of learning basic skills. Student motivation would most likely be higher since the basic skills instruction would be tied to the students' vocational courses.

CON

- In most of the state's LAVSD schools the infusion of basic skills into the vocational program would not occur until the junior or senior year. School districts would be reluctant to provide remediation in the later years since students would have most likely failed the HSPT for two consecutive years.

- Given the time frame, it would be difficult to provide in-service training to vocational-technical educators in the area of remedial instruction.

- A vocational teaching certificate does not allow vocational instructors to teach high school graduation requirements in the areas covered by the HSPT.

5. Provide a prevocational, remedial HSPT education summer program for students who fail the HSPT.

PRO

- Students interested in vocational-technical education would be motivated to take a program during the summer which includes 50 percent vocational orientation and 50 percent basic skills instruction.

- Students would recognize that if they wished to continue in a vocational-technical program they would have to complete their basic skills instruction during the summer program.

CON

- Funds would have to be made available for school districts to initiate such a program.

Recommendation/Rationale

Since the HSPT is given at the ninth-grade level and only once a year, the identification of students who need remediation comes late in relation to vocational-technical education programs offered over a span of four years. Since the HSPT focuses on specific skills in math and writing, it is recommended that students be treated on an individual basis in the following manner.

1. All students who fail the HSPT during the freshman year should be offered the option of vocational-technical education and other curriculum programs available at the high school. Given the selection of a vocational-technical education program, students should be scheduled for a summer program following their ninth-grade program. The summer program would focus specifically on their weaknesses, as reported by the HSPT. The program would consist of the following: vocational career orientation, 50 percent; basic skills instruction, 50 percent. Funds would have to be made available in order to serve this population.

2. Given the option of summer programs, basic skills instruction should also be infused into all vocational-technical education courses in order that students continue to develop and use basic skills. Skills cannot be retained unless they are continually used. By infusing basic skills at all levels of vocational education, in the appropriate manner, students would have the benefits of maintaining their basic skills and applying them in vocational-technical training. Students would also be able to meet the requirements of employers who need workers with basic skills as well as occupationally specific skills.

In conclusion, the recommendation is to provide summer remedial programs for students interested in vocational-technical education. The remedial program would follow the initiation of the ninth grade tests. In turn, the basic skills obtained in the remedial program would be reinforced by the infusion of basic skills into all vocational-technical education programs.

CHAPTER FOUR

BASIC SKILLS AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE SHARED TIME VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

CHAIR: Victor Morella

COMMITTEE MEMBERS: Ronald Brown
Marcia Deitz
Michael Klavon
Sharon Portman
Samuel Vukcevich

CHAPTER FOUR
BASIC SKILLS AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE SHARED TIME VOCATIONAL SCHOOLS

Issue

How should shared-time vocational schools modify their current academic and vocational education operational procedures to enable students to participate in vocational education programs while obtaining the basic skills needed to pass the High School Proficiency Test (HSPT)?

Options

1. Shared time vocational schools should provide remedial training to those students who fail the HSPT.

   PRO

   - Shared time vocational schools would deliver basic skills instruction. This option would require additional staff and coordination with the sending districts in order to identify those students who need remediation. Employers want students to have basic skills as well as employability skills and occupationally specific skills.

   CON

   - Shared time vocational schools cannot immediately deliver HSPT remediation. Shared time vocational high schools cannot, in two years, remedy what sending schools have been unable to do in the previous ten years.

   - The cost of offering remediation programs in the vocational shared time schools would be prohibitive.

   - It is unrealistic to expect the shared time vocational high school teacher to provide remediation for the HSPT. Much retraining would be required. Support for such an endeavor would have to be the responsibility of the State Board of Education.

2. Adjustments should be made to the vocational delivery systems to best serve students who require remedial training.

   PRO

   - Vocational education already contains many basic skills components, however, these skills are taught through application rather than conceptually for universal application. Additional training, certification or staffing would be required along with curriculum redesign. While this option is possible, it would take more time than what would seem to be available.

CON

- Adjustments to the delivery system could best be made in the comprehensive high school, the LAVSD, and the four-year vocational high school. Adjustments could be related to revised scheduling for tenth grade students who do not pass the HSPT or revised ninth grade scheduling for those students who have poor potential for passing the HSPT based upon the results of elementary school student performance.

3. All vocational education should be postsecondary.

PRO

- Enrollment in vocational programs would increase since transportation and graduation requirements would not be a factor. The transition would require major changes in legislation, funding, and coordination with community colleges.

CON

- There is need for both postsecondary and secondary education. Shared time secondary education must be made available, by priority, to secondary students. Should space and time be available, postsecondary students should be admitted according to the same rules, regulations and policies promulgated by each respective board of education.

4. Should there be a thirteenth and fourteenth year?

PRO

- In those New Jersey counties where there is a community college, there should be no barrier to the establishment of a joint effort by the county vocational shared time high school and the county college to provide the best education for citizen students. Shared time vocational high schools are best equipped to provide the "hands-on" portion; and the community colleges are best able to provide the technically related theory. This combined effort would assure more than simply entry level skill training.

CON

- Articulation agreements, coordinating such items as common calendars, staff credentials, and many other details, would have to be approved by each institution.

5. Shared time vocational schools should be eliminated.

PRO

CON

- New Jersey's academic high schools cannot afford to equip and operate vocational technical high school programs. Concentrated specialized training can best be provided by the shared time vocational high school. The shared time schools offer students specialization, concentration, and specificity and therefore provide the best entry level training available.

- The State Department of Education must develop regulations that encourage and enforce specialized training. Duplicate funding to the sending school districts for those programs also offered at the shared time vocational school should not be permitted. During times when there is a formulation of a County Career Plan, it should be understood that the funding of vocational programs must be based upon employment, surveys, supply and demand, and appropriateness of program placement to serve the majority of students. Duplication of funding must be eliminated.

6. Regulations governing the delivery of vocational education should be revised in light of the HSPT.

PRO

- The time requirements set by vocational school regulations would have to be modified. State high school graduation requirements are increasing, thereby reducing the amount of time available to provide vocational programs to shared-time students.

- It must be recognized that shared-time vocational education is a worthy, yet expensive educational offering. HSPT remediation will add to the taxpayer's burden.

CON

- If changes are not made to the current regulations, shared time county vocational schools will experience continued decreases in enrollment.

Recommendation/Rationale

Shared time high school vocational education indeed has its place, as local education needs warrant and economic needs dictate. It is understood that not all counties need vocational shared time facilities, but many do. Counties which have shared time facilities can meet the needs of the students, the local school districts, and the taxpayers. With the support of the local school districts (secondary schools) and the strong arm of the State Department of Education (Division of Vocational Education), our secondary students can indeed attend "their own high-schools" and still specialize and train in the vocational programs, gaining entry-level skills. This training will assure that students will be self-sustaining and contributing members of their families and communities upon graduation from high school.

To assure the success of these programs, the sending schools must provide the best possible education from grades kindergarten through twelve. This includes the provision of any remedial instruction the students might require in order to graduate upon completion of both academic and vocational education programs.

Consequences/Impact

Shared time vocational high schools (eleventh and twelfth grades) have limitations regarding scheduled time and assigned faculty. Subject matter presentation, theory, related math and science, and "hands-on-trade"

experience tax the total ability and capability of each assigned teacher. To take time away from any of these crucial program elements would indeed dilute the total program effort. Therefore, remediation should be provided by the school granting the graduation diploma.

CHAPTER FIVE

BASIC SKILLS AND THE FULL TIME VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

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CHAPTER FIVE
BASIC SKILLS AND THE FULL-TIME VOCATIONAL SCHOOL

Issue

How should full time vocational schools modify their operational procedures to enable students to participate in vocational education programs while obtaining the basic skills needed to pass the High School Proficiency Test.

Options

1. Pull-Out Program

   Under this program, students would be removed from various academic courses or vocational shops to receive remedial instruction in basic skills.

   PRO

   - Instruction would be provided by staff members who are skilled in the strategies of basic skills remediation.

   CON

   - The continuity of academic and shop instruction would be disrupted.
   - Students dislike being pulled out of classes or shops. This could result in attendance problems.

2. Modify academic courses/replacement project

   Certain academic curricula in a comprehensive vocational-technical high school would be modified to emphasize the basic skills inherent in a particular subject. The development and the remedial instruction would take place within the same content area.

   PRO

   - Smaller class sizes would benefit the students.
   - There would be no loss of time from the shop or academic content areas.
   - This option should result in greater emphasis on basic skills instruction.
   - The awarding of course credit could increase student motivation.
   - This option would cause the least disruption of the students' instructional programs.

   CON

   - Developmental course content could be sacrificed.

3. Replacement of academic electives

Students would not be able to select an academic elective. Instead they would be required to take a basic skills class until they passed the High School Proficiency Test (HSPT).

PRO

- Additional time-on-task should result in quicker remediation of deficient skills.
- There would be no attendance problems.
- This option would ensure greater devotion to the remediation of basic skills.

CON

- Students would be denied the selection of an elective course until the basic skills are remediated.
- Students could be stigmatized as "basic skills students."

4. Services delivered by vocational shop instructors

This approach would require vocational instructors to integrate within the shop classroom all of the basic skills needed by students to pass the HSPT.

PRO

- Basic skills remediation could have greater meaning and relevance because instruction would be coming through the course content in which students are interested.

CON

- Not all of the students in a particular shop would have failed the HSPT and need remediation of basic skills.
- This approach would be complicated by the number of persons who would have to be involved in order to ensure the remediation of skills. The vocational shop instructor may have just recently come from the skilled trades into teaching and would not be skilled in integrating basic skills remediation into the overall shop instruction.

5. Program Learning/Computer-Aided Instruction

This approach to the remediation of basic skills could only supplement rather than take the place of one of the more comprehensive approaches.

6. Modified exploratory shop time

In vocational schools, the ninth grade shop curriculum is often designed to provide students with an exploration of a variety of shop programs. By modifying (shortening) the exploratory shop time, students' programs

would allow for the scheduling of basic skills instruction. Basic skills instruction would be delivered through a daily remedial class taught by specially trained instructors.

PRO

- This option is attractive because it would have little impact on the acquisition of vocational skills.
- Students not in need of basic skills instruction would be free to schedule an additional elective.

CON

- This option would be limited to one grade level.

7. Modified major shop time

In this option all major shop classes would be reduced in instructional time by one period, freeing students to be scheduled into a basic skills instructional program.

Recommendation/Rationale

1. Replacement of academic electives.
2. Modify academic courses/replacement project.
3. Modified exploratory shop time.

CHAPTER SIX

AWARDING DIPLOMA CREDITS

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CHAPTER SIX
AWARDING DIPLOMA CREDITS

Issue

What strategies need to be developed to provide a rationale for sending school districts to award diploma credit for vocational courses which contain basic skills but are taught in the shared time vocational school?

Options

1. The shared time vocational schools should be closed and the vocational programs should be offered in each of the sending schools.

   PRO

   - The vocational and basic skills teachers would be in the same facility under a common administrator. Infusion activities and flexible time schedules would be facilitated.

   CON

   - The cost of duplicating vocational programs at all of the sending schools would require an immeasurable amount of time and money.
   - The closing down of the shared time facilities would result in a considerable financial loss.

2. The shared time vocational schools should be converted to full time area vocational high schools.

   PRO

   - The vocational and basic skills teachers would be in the same facility under a common administrator. Infusion activities and flexible time schedules would be facilitated.

   CON

   - The funds and the time required to expand the teaching faculty and the facilities in order to meet all of the graduation requirements would be immeasurable.
   - The effect of declining enrollment on the sending schools would be very disruptive.

3. Teams of basic skills instructors from the sending schools should work with the vocational teachers in the infusion of the basic skills into the vocational courses. This infusion would be accomplished through a competency based program, and the results would be utilized at each of the sending schools to award diploma credit.

PRO

- This approach would allow the student to attend classes at the shared time vocational school for the full half day and still receive the basic skills instruction needed.

- A homogeneity of basic skills instruction would be available to all vocational students, regardless of their sending schools.

- When compared to the cost of establishing remedial sections at the sending schools and the cost to society of the loss of occupational training for students, the option of sending basic skills instructors to work with the vocational teachers would be very cost effective.

CON

- This option would require a great deal of cooperation between sending and receiving school administrators and between basic skills and vocational teachers.

4. The shared time vocational schools should hire basic skills teachers, on a full time or part time basis, to teach the basic skills at the vocational schools. This would be accomplished through a competency based program, and the results would be utilized by each of the sending schools to award diploma credit.

PRO

- This option would allow the student to attend classes at the shared time vocational school for the full half day and still receive the basic skills instruction needed.

- A homogeneity of basic skills instruction would be available to all vocational students, regardless of their sending schools.

- When compared to the cost of establishing remedial sections at the sending schools and the cost to society of the loss of occupational training for students, the option of hiring basic skills instructors would be very cost effective.

CON

- Would the sending schools feel any obligation to cooperate in the facilitation of the program since the students would not be receiving basic skills instruction at the sending schools?

5. A team of vocational teachers should become certified in each of the basic skills subject areas.

PRO

- This option would utilize the existing teachers at the vocational schools and would not require the cooperation of the sending schools for awarding diploma credit.

- This option would not be disruptive to the vocational program and would allow homogeneity of the basic skills instruction available to all vocational students.

CON

- This option would require additional vocational teachers, possibly in areas (e.g., electronics) in which a shortage of teachers already exists.

- The amount of time required for vocational teachers to be certified would be considerable.

6. The shared time vocational schools should award a vocational certificate upon the completion of occupational competencies, regardless of the number of years in school and knowledge of the basic skills.

PRO

- This option would place the emphasis of the vocational program on vocational education.

CON

- This approach would not insure that a student would become competent in the basic skills and may encourage students to drop out of high school upon earning a vocational certificate.

Recommendation/Rationale

Option three is recommended: A team of basic skills teachers from the sending schools should be established to work with the vocational teachers in the infusion of the basic skills into the vocational courses. This would be accomplished through a competency based program, and the results would be utilized to award diploma credit at each of the sending schools.

Each member of the team of teachers should represent a basic skills area that is included in the High School Proficiency Test. The team should work with the vocational teachers to set up a competency based basic skills program that would be homogeneous across all vocational programs, but, at the same time, would be adapted to the content of each particular vocational program. For example, the mathematics content of automotive courses would have different application problems than the mathematics content of carpentry courses.

Upon demonstration by the students of a specified competency level, which would be established by the basic skills team, the vocational teachers would report the students' achievement to the sending school. The sending school would then apply the appropriate credit to the students' records. This, of course, implies that a carefully constructed set of procedures would be established by the basic skills team, in cooperation with the vocational teachers. Considerable professional inservice training would be required for all professionals directly or indirectly involved.

Consequences/Impact

Instituting the above recommendations would permit the vocational students at the shared time vocational schools to spend a full half day at the vocational school and receive basic skills instruction as needed. At the same time, the sending schools would be assured that their expectations in basic skills competencies would be met through the active involvement of the basic skills team in the establishment of criteria to be used.

A positive by-product of the recommendations might be that the academic and vocational teachers would establish a rapport. That rapport could, in turn, result in closer relationships between the sending schools and the shared time vocational schools. The active promotion and support of the vocational school would also send a signal to all vocational students that vocational educators place considerable importance on each student's achievement in the basic skills.

Finally, the recommended option offers a cost-efficient method for the school districts. This should enable the administrators to obtain the required endorsements from each school board involved.